

MICHIGAN SNOWMOBILE AND SAFETY GUIDE



Provided by Your State Senator

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Dear Michigan Snowmobiler:

With exciting terrain, natural beauty and a network of 6,200 miles of groomed trails, Michigan is a haven for snowmobile fun and adventure.

With the season upon us, I want to send along some snowmobile news and safety information that may be of interest. You can find more safety tips, along with updates on rules, regulations, permits and snowmobile safety classes at www.michigan.gov/dnr. Click on Recreation and Camping on the left sidebar. You can also take a look at the state snowmobile trail system regional map to help plan your trips.

I hope you and your family enjoy a safe and fun snowmobiling season. If my office can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me toll-free at 877-KUIPERS or by e-mail at senwkuipers@senate.michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Kuipers".

Wayne Kuipers
State Senator



Senator Kuipers supports industry noise standards

Approximately 50 percent of the snowmobile trails in Michigan are located on private property with the landowners' permission. "Good neighbor" legislation passed by the Senate will help ensure people can continue to enjoy those trails.

Under current law, snowmobiles operated on trails must be equipped with a muffler meeting a noise level standard. Unfortunately, some people install racing exhausts to make the snowmobiles much noisier than when they came from the manufacturer.

Senate Bill 530 would update the noise standards in statute, making it easier to ticket those operators who do not comply with the noise limits. The bill would also adopt an 88-decibel limit for idling snowmobiles. The legislation applies to snowmobiles operated on trails, not at events on snowmobile racing tracks.

Taking steps to curb noise nuisances helps enhance the safety and enjoyment of the sport for everyone. The bill won unanimous Senate approval and awaits consideration in the House.

Senator Kuipers encourages safety on the snow

There's no better way to enjoy a Michigan winter than taking an exhilarating ride on the trails. To keep your trip safe and enjoyable:

- Never consume alcohol or other drugs before or during snowmobiling.
- Operate at safe and reasonable speeds.
- Stay on trails and areas where snowmobiling is permitted.
- Be familiar with the snowmobile you ride – keep your machine in top mechanical condition.
- Always wear a helmet and protective clothing.
- Avoid, when possible, crossing frozen bodies of water.
- Keep headlights and taillights on at all times.
- Use extra caution at night.
- Never ride alone. Let others know where you're going.
- Check weather conditions before you depart.
- Carry emergency supplies and learn survival skills.

Last year's snowmobile season was the safest in many years. Let's set a new safety record this year!

Ice fishing

Many winter sportsmen and women enjoy a special season of fishing in Michigan, either on the ice or along the open water.

Ice fishing requires extreme caution – just because a body of water is frozen doesn't mean the ice is safe. Take extra care to make sure the ice is thick enough and there is no moving water under the ice.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources reminds all anglers to:

- Dress warmly.
- Use the buddy system.
- Test the thickness and quality of any ice with a spud first.
- Check for the most up-to-date information on ice conditions.



Mark your calendar!

February 16-17, 2008 is the date of Michigan's free ice fishing weekend. Fishing license fees are waived for residents and out-of-state visitors alike on both inland and Great Lakes waters. All fishing regulations still apply. Visit www.michigan.gov/dnr for more information about ice fishing and shanty regulations.

Resources on the web

Snowmobiles weren't always the sleek machines they are today. Plan a trip to the **Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum** in Naubinway to see snowmobiles dating back to the beginning of the sport. Visit www.topofthelake.org.

Find trail information, a full list of snowmobile clubs and a statewide **Calendar of Events** at the Michigan Snowmobile Association website, www.msasnow.org.

Cold temperatures and wind chill are among the factors that can contribute to frostbite and hypothermia, two potentially serious health conditions. Check out the **Wind Chill Chart** developed by the National Weather Service at www.nws.noaa.gov/om/windchill/.

Hands on for safety

Communication is an important part of safe sledding, especially when traveling in groups or approaching an intersection. Every snowmobiler should learn and use hand signals to increase safety on the trails. Remember these basic signals when you head out:

- **Left Turn:** left arm extended straight out
- **Right Turn:** left arm out, forearm raised, with elbow at 90-degree angle
- **Stop:** left arm raised straight up
- **Slow:** left arm out and angled toward ground

Learn about these and other hand signals approved by the American Council of Snowmobile Associations at www.snowmobilers.org.